



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW

Stormy weather muddied water and kept many anglers at the docks across portions of the Virginia coast this past week. When the weather cooperated, flounder sizes throughout the area seem to be increasing, despite the ever-present throw backs. The spot run is beginning throughout the area, and many of the local piers saw a big increase in both spot and croaker catches this week.

However, this past weekend, a monster cobia was landed by local angler Wes Blow (see inset picture). Wes was fishing on his own, managed to have one cobia, which eventually got away, come through and wrap up all of his lines. While fixing the mess, Wes noticed that one line had something on, and in the distance it looked like a small cobia, so Wes went to work cutting and splicing lines so he could reel in this 'other' cobia. Now, before we go further, realize, Wes was 'hand lining' this 'other' cobia while splicing lines. Once he had the line spliced back to a reel and put on some pressure, the fight was on! Long story short, after numerous runs, spooling of his reel, and concerns about the splice not holding throughout the fight, the fish was landed and brought into Wallace's Bait and Tackle for the official weigh in. The monster cobia was 105 pounds and 8 ounces! Wes is a regular contributor to the Marine Sportfish Collection Project, and after having his fish molded by David Saunders at Mountain Breeze Taxidermy, Wes allowed us to collect the otoliths for ageing. In the next few months, we will determine the age of this beast and pass it on to our readers. Congrats Wes!



THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

According to Donna at Captain Bob's Marina, the offshore wrecks have been hot with spadefish and black sea bass. A few flounder have been caught there as well, and a 9-pound flounder was brought in this week. Inshore flounder action continues around Daisy's Dockside and the Coast Guard Station. Kingfish were also found inshore, and croaker have increased in size. They have been found from the Chincoteague Channel to the west side of the Queen's Sound Bridge. Unfortunately, the recent thunderstorms have stirred up a lot of grass in the channels.

Onancock

It was a slow week for fishing in Onancock, according to Captain Wil. He has noticed that the fish have not been schooling up in the area lately. The croaker have been small to medium this week. Keeper flounder are scattered but available in the deeper water, and the croaker bite has been the best in the evenings. Sea mullet catches have continued to be decent.

Wachapreague

Staff at the Wachapreague Marina reported that anglers have been catching flounder on the offshore wrecks. Big game fish have been hard to find, but a few dolphin were landed. Inshore, there have been a lot of throw back flounder, but numerous croaker.

Anglers fishing out of Captain Zed's have had luck with large flounder at Buoy 10 and the Paramore Reef. On the outgoing tide, the Hummocks have produced nice flounder as well. A few black sea bass have been caught in the area, and Mill Stone Creek, Seal Creek, and Bradford's Channel have produced grey trout.

Cape Charles

At Chris' Bait and Tackle, croaker were reported from Buoy 262 and the Ditch area. There was also a good croaker bite near Oyster between buoys 5 and 7, at the Chimney, and near Morley's Wharf at the Tower. Several large flounder (10 pounds, 7 pounds, and 8 pounds) were landed from Buoy 36A using cut bait and squid. Cobia and shark were biting cut bunker near buoys 13 and 16, and spadefish were caught at the Cell and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel pilings, specifically near the 4th Island.

Captain Ray Cardone, from Cherrystone, reported several keeper flounder landings in recent days. The largest was a 20-inch flounder landed by an angler from New Jersey. A triggerfish was landed as well. The grey trout and croaker bite has also been doing well lately.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

Flounder fishing has picked up in the area, according to staff at Cobb's Marina. A citation flounder (7

pounds, 15 ounces) was brought in from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel on August 2nd. A few spadefish, drum, and cobia were reported as well, and there was a 53-inch red drum release citation reported last week.

The folks at Sunset Boating Center also reported good flounder action last week topped off with a 9-pound, 8-ounce flounder caught on August 5th at the 3rd Island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Several boats have reported multiple keeper-sized flounder per trip.

Few anglers left the dock at Salt Ponds Marina last week, but those that did had success with flounder, spot, and croaker.

Staff at the York River Fishing Center reported a good flounder and cobia bite this week. An 8-pound, 1-ounce citation flounder was brought in from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel on August 5th, and a 53-pound cobia was brought in last week. Most of the flounder were caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and cobia have come in from the York Spit to Bluefish Rock. The York Spit has also been producing some Spanish mackerel as well.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

Cobia fishing is very good, especially with the numbers of large fish being caught. Spanish mackerel fishing is good all along the oceanfront. It is very good out around the Chesapeake Light Tower. Flounder fishing has really heated up this week with some very impressive catches coming from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Amberjack remain plentiful at the southern towers. Offshore fishing was on the slow side this week out of Virginia, but expect that to be a brief lull. Catches to both our north and south are very good.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

As summer presses on, many favorite species are available within mid-Atlantic waters. The biggest news is the jump-start of the flounder action this week. Anglers are making up for lost time, filling coolers with plenty of keeper-sized flatties and heading to the scales with dozens of trophy-sized doormats. Big flatfish are coming from all four islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel using both live bait and jigs donned with plastics or stripped bait. Drifters are also finding good luck along lower bay channels, deep water drop-offs, near buoys 36A and 42, and the Cell.

The rest of the inshore scene is dominated by cobia. These stealthy fish are making a strong showing for both chummers and top water casters, with several fish over 70 pounds hitting the docks this week. Many cobia are beginning their late summer trend of favoring buoys and bridge pilings and cruising on the surface. As for chumming, the largest fish of the year—a monster 105.5-pound cobia—was landed this week after bypassing the Newport News angler's live bait and hitting his offering of frozen bunker.

Red drum are still roaming the 9-Foot Shoals and the barrier islands of the Eastern Shore. Black drum are circling the artificial islands, but expect these fish to begin moving out soon.

Oceans East 2 reports that puppy drum are still a sure thing within most all lower bay backwaters, with Lynnhaven Inlet and Little Creek Inlet producing lately. Cut mullet is working well as bait.

Croaker are everywhere from the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The big bite out of Oyster continues to yield coolers full of medium-sized hardheads from the deeper part of the channel. Medium-sized spot are still hitting near Ocean View and off the Concrete Ships. Reports of large spot are coming from further up the bay, which could be a good sign for our fall spot run.

A few sheepshead were hooked along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel this week, but expect to work for your catch. Triggerfish and tautog are mixed in with sheepshead and spadefish along the bridge tunnel. Spadefish, triggerfish, and tautog are also feeding on inshore and near shore wrecks, along with some decent black sea bass. The larger spades are located near the high rise section of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and Plantation Light.

Trollers are finding some accommodating Spanish mackerel along the oceanfront, the CB buoy line, and near the Chesapeake Light Tower and reef area. Small gold and silver spoons are the best lure for these fish. Die-hard king mackerel anglers are still waiting for the king bite to materialize, but there have been no positive signs as of yet. The king action off the Carolina coastline is good right now, with several large smokers landed recently.

An exceptional showing of sharks along Virginia's coastal waters is attracting a lot of attention. Although most of these toothy critters are too small to keep, several fish are stretching past the 54-inch minimum fork length. Be sure to review the regulations before targeting these gluttonous hunters.

Chris at Chris' Bait and Tackle had good news on the tarpon front. Although sightings are still low, a hand full of hook-ups and landings this week gave silver king enthusiasts new hope for a reemerging bite.

Deep dropping action is still good. The head boats running out of the Fishing Center in Rudee Inlet are still cleaning up with big blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, grouper, and blackbelly rosefish.

Amberjack are still available on several wrecks and navigational towers. Plan an early morning trip to avoid the heat. Be prepared, as anglers are sorting through dozens of smaller fish to find larger fish.

Bluewater anglers are experiencing a scattered billfish action, but this should improve over the next few weeks. The tuna action is something to be desired, but nice gaffer dolphin and a few wahoo and mako sharks are available to take up the slack.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, with Jetts' Hardware, reports the Spanish mackerel have been the fish to beat. Numbers have been good, and staff expects bluefish to begin mixing in as well. Spot are around, and they have been getting

larger.

Dan, at Smith's Point Marina, reports that there are flounder around the jetties and the channel lights in deeper water. Bluefish schools have also been around the area and can load up your trolled tackle in a hurry. Spanish mackerel bite continues its strong run as well. Striped bass are still around, and most would be keepers if they were in season. Spot are biting and are reaching generous pan sizes. The surprise of the week has been the appearance of large red drum around the Northern Neck Reef, with 42- to 48-inch fish not uncommon.

Captain Jim Thompson reports that spot are the fish of the day with some croakers mixed in the catches. They are growing larger every day now with some jumbos being caught. Flounder are active, but sizes are small with a few keepers around. Spanish mackerel are at the mouth of the Rappahannock and Piankatank rivers in full force. All in all, fishing is very good.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Bay surface temperatures are 80 degrees, and the Spanish mackerel have returned to local waters. Good catches continue to be made off Stingray Light, along Windmill Bar, and along the bar edge in Fleets Bay. They are also available along the tug boat channel from MF1 south to Wolftrap Light. Local creeks and rivers are producing keeper spot and croaker, and good-sized spot have moved to the Spike. Good numbers of stiff-back perch and whiting are mixed in with the spot in deeper holes.

Flounder fishing remains inconsistent. There are as many keeper fish being caught on the west side of the bay and in the rivers as there are in the traditional Buoy 42 and Cell areas. Speckled trout and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are available in waters over hard bottom and grass beds. Peelers are working very well, as are live bunker caught by cast nets.

Virginia Beach

Staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center reported that Rudee Inlet has produced numerous spot this week. Undersized flounder were abundant as well and mixed with catches of speckled trout, puppy drum, and Spanish mackerel. Anglers also caught blacktip and sharpnose shark. Offshore tiger, mako, and hammerhead shark were found, along with blue marlin, white marlin, and sailfish. Dolphin, amberjack, and a few yellowfin tuna rounded out the offshore catches.

Paula, from Fisherman's Wharf Marina, reported a decent white marlin bite at the Triple 0s over the past week.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Pier, there was a really nice spot and croaker run this week, with scattered flounder mixed in.

Spot and sea mullet were landed at the Lynnhaven Pier this week, along with small flounder and abundant blue crabs.

Crabbing has been wonderful at the Virginia Beach Pier this week. Spot are increasing in size, and decent-size sea mullet, Spanish mackerel, undersized flounder, black drum, and puppy drum were also landed.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, the spot run has been really good this week. Pier visitors have had the best luck with blood worms. Keeper flounder have also been coming in from the pier along with shark, taylor bluefish, croaker, and small cobia.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet continues to be strong with good numbers of dolphin, wahoo, king mackerel, and yellowfin tuna. Other catches include blackfin tuna, bonito, and blueline tilefish for the bottom droppers. Billfish have slacked off a little bit over the past week but continue to be above average with all three species present. Artificial reefs continue to produce tautog, sheepshead, and triggerfish in good numbers, and nearshore trolling has seen the Spanish mackerel and bluefish hookups at good rates. Those fishing from shore or the piers have been getting in on the Spanish mackerel and bluefish action as well along with spot, croaker, puffers, pompano, and spadefish. Inshore, the action still continues to be good for spotted seatrout and flounder. The flounder continue to work the shallows and drop-offs around the islands and mainland, and spotted seatrout have been caught in their usual haunts early in the mornings.

South of Oregon Inlet, bluefish and Spanish mackerel have been working around the Point. Spot, croaker, and sea mullet have been caught on the north and south beaches. With good weather, expect to see this action continue into the weekend.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet continues to be good as blackfin tuna, amberjack, dolphin, and wahoo keep anglers' reels going. There are reports of billfish releases as well, but the action has been scattered. Inshore fishing action has been hot lately with speckled trout and Spanish mackerel leading the way. Stormy weather has been a player over the last week as well, so keep an eye out for those afternoon thunderstorms.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.








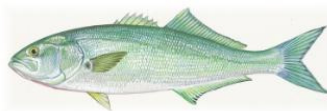
ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The header includes the commission's name and logo. The main content area is titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and includes a "Welcome Jgrist," message. There are two main sections: "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" which explains the need for length data for a stock assessment, and "New 2008 Tautog Regs" which lists the closed season (May 1 through June 24), minimum size limit (14 inches), and possession limit (4 per person). A sidebar on the left shows statistics for June 16, 2008: Members: 1,457, Trips: 295, and Catches: 3,941. At the bottom, there are "Related Links" and a "Feedback" section.

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!

VMRC-Managed

Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk

Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach

Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton

Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles

Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague



*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia

The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

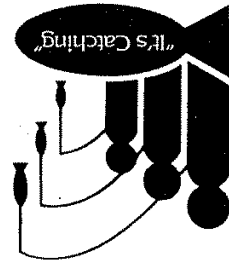
If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email

alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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Practice

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REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water